



George H. Cardinet Jr.

April 8, 1909 – January 19, 2007

Candy man, Grandfather of Trails, and 67 year resident of Concord

George H. Cardinet Jr., 97, of Concord passed away on Friday in Mexico City. A descendant of 49er French immigrants, George was born in San Francisco to George H. Cardinet, co-founder of the Cardinet Candy Co., and Mary de Sales (Morgan) Cardinet. George was raised in Oakland and after graduation from St. Mary's High School, he worked for the Cardinet Candy Co., makers of U-NO and Baffle Bar candy bars. George succeeded his father as President of the company and was named Candy Man of the Year in 1959 by the National Confectioner's Association. In 1940, George purchased a ranch and moved his family to Concord where he resided until his death.

George was an avid horseman and for over 65 years he worked tirelessly as an advocate for the preservation of public open space, and the development of parks, and riding and hiking trails. His impact on the development of trails spanned local, regional, state and national trails. He first became involved in trail advocacy in the early 40's as a member of the Contra Costa Development Association concerned with the development of recreational open space to support the growing populations associated with the county's industrial development. His trail development in Contra Costa County served as a model for the California State Riding and Hiking Trail Plan that eventually led to the California Riding and Hiking Trails Act of 1945 and the California Recreational Trails Act of 1974. At the same time, George's efforts significantly contributed to the National Trails System Act of 1968 that established an extensive system of scenic and historic trails. The Pacific Crest Trail and the Appalachian Trail were the first to be designated National Historic Trails by the Act. For his contributions, George was invited to the White House by President Lyndon Johnson to receive recognition for his accomplishments.

Besides trails, George had an intense interest in competitive equestrian drill team competition and he served as drill master for the Concord Flying Horsemen, a junior drill team that won the California State Horsemen's Association Drill Team Championship in 1950.

George worked with the East Bay Regional Park District to annex portions of Contra Costa County with the park district to establish trail links between east bay regional parks and Mt. Diablo State Park. In all, George is credited with having mapped and routed more than 200 miles of trails throughout the greater Easy Bay region.

Over the years, the historic nature of the Juan Bautista de Anza Trail held a special appeal for George. It was his passion. The 1,500 mile trail was the overland route traveled by de Anza in 1775 and 1776 while shepherding 198 immigrants and their escorts along with 1,000 head of livestock on the first colonizing expedition from Sonora, Mexico into Alta and Upper California.

In 1976, he chaired and organized a bicentennial reenactment celebration of the trail, and rode a major portion of the trail on horseback, portraying Lieutenant Moraga, Anza's first in command. After many years of work to meet the Standard of the 1968 National Trails System Act, George in partnership with the National Park Service succeeded in having the trail designated as The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail by an act of Congress in 1990. Later, under George's leadership and advocacy in a nationwide competition sponsored by the Millennium Council, the Department of Transportation, and the Rails to Trails Conservancy, The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail was designated a Millennium Trail. He was again invited to the White House, and in appreciation of his efforts, he received a certificate from First Lady Hillary Clinton that stated, in part, "Cardinet's leadership will play an important role in achieving the goal of a nationwide network of trails that preserve open spaces, interpret history and culture, and promote alternative transportation routes as well as recreation and tourism."

For his longstanding and sustained advocacy of trails, George has become known as the Father of California Trails by the California State Horsemen's Association, and the Grandfather of the Juan Bautista de Anza Historic Trail as well as the Grandfather of National Trails by the National Park Service.

George was a founding member and past president of the California State Horsemen's Association, the Concord-Mt. Diablo Trail Ride Association, The Heritage Trails Fund and Amigos de Anza, He also served on the Contra Costa County Fair Board of Directors for 25 years.

With all of George's accomplishments have come numerous awards, resolutions and dedications. Among these are resolutions received from the State Legislature, the dedication of trails in his name within Mt. Diablo State Park (1992), and the town of Clayton (1996) as well as his designation as an Honorary California State Park Ranger in 2005.

Mr. Cardinet is survived by a brother, Walter M. Cardinet of Auburn, a son, Dr. George H. Cardinet III and daughter-in-law, Claudia Cardinet of Winters; and daughters Maureen Casteel and Michele Tomasulo and sons-in-law, Gary Casteel and Anthony Tomasulo, all of Concord. He was preceded in death by his parents, wife Margaret M. (Bowen)

Cardinet, and a son Owen C. Cardinet. George had 13 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren.

Visitation will be held Thursday, January 25 at Ouimet Bros. Chapel, 4125 Clayton Rd., Concord, from 5-8 p.m., with Vigil services at 7 p.m. Funeral Liturgy will be at St. Bonaventure Catholic Church, 5562 Clayton Road, Concord, January 26 at 10:00 a.m. Following a reception at the church, interment will be at Queen of Heaven Cemetery, 1965 Reliez Valley Rd., Lafayette. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the George H. Cardinet Jr. Memorial Trails Fund, P. O. Box 612, Clayton, CA 94517.

Ouimet Bros. Chapel
(925-682-4242)